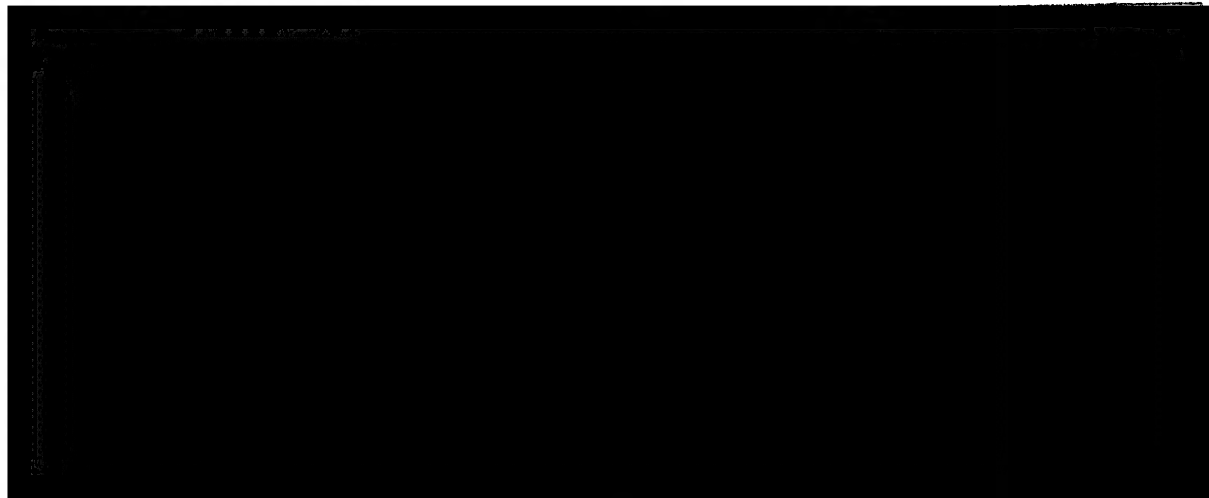


INTELLOFAX 25

COUNTRY France
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1. At a meeting of the Bureau Politique (BP) of the French Communist Party on 12 March, Marcel Cachin, presiding in the absence of Jacques Duclos who was ill, took three important members of the BP to task for allowing themselves to become influenced by "deviationist" ideas. The three were Auguste Lecoœur, Francois Billoux, and Leon Mauvais, all of whom were criticized for having believed that the Soviet Union wanted war. According to source, these signs of "political weakness" have seriously upset the BP, and it may take months, if not years, before Lecoœur, Billoux, and Mauvais are considered entirely reliable again.
2. The charges come about after criticism of the French Communist Party by Andrei Gromyko in commenting on a letter which Stalin is alleged to have addressed to Duclos.* Gromyko, in reminding the Party that Stalin's letter called for a reply, remarked that he was convinced that there were a few Party leaders who were sitting back in the expectation that the Soviet Union would attack France in order to "liberate" it, and that there were some Central Committee members who did not take seriously the peace proposals of the USSR. This attitude, Gromyko (and Cachin after him) is supposed to have said, could not be tolerated.
3. Auguste Lecoœur, speaking in his own defense, admitted that he had been mistaken. He declared he had believed that the BP was convinced of the USSR desire for peace but that it had been deceiving itself. He admitted he had been guilty of a grave political error.
4. Francois Billoux admitted also that he had been wrong. He had thought, he declared, that just as the war in Korea was launched to avoid, or retard, the establishment of a cordon sanitaire to isolate China, it could be logically supposed that the USSR would launch a war when the cordon sanitaire which is the Atlantic Pact became too great a danger.

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5. Andre Marty, member of the Secretariat of the PCF, said it was distressing that Party directors like Billoux had publicly defended the position of the USSR towards peace without themselves being convinced.
6. The incident pleased Marty, who has no liking for Lecœur. It is certain that the three men accused of deviation will be placed under close surveillance and that they are aware of it. Billoux stated that if it was thought that he wanted to create a clique within the Party, which would constitute treason, he would not hesitate to kill himself. Upon the return of Maurice Thorez from the USSR source believes decisions will be made in accordance with directives from Moscow.

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